

SIDCUP & DISTRICT UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE NEWSLETTER

April 2013



SIDCUP & DISTRICT U3A meets at 2.00 pm on the 3rd Thursday of every month in the Community Church in Station Road, Sidcup

NOTICES

Group Leaders' Meeting

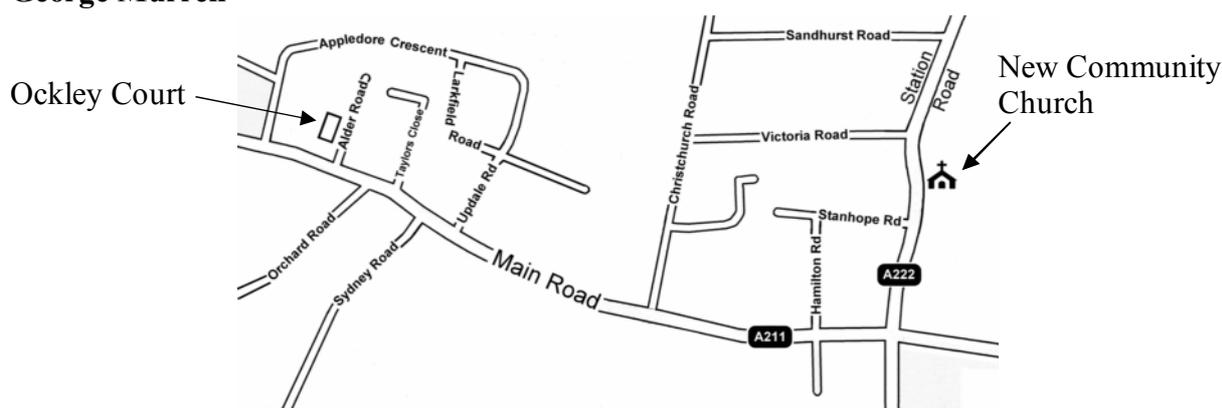
All group leaders are invited to attend a meeting at 10 am Thursday 2nd May in the residents' lounge at Ockley Court, Alder Road, Sidcup. Coffee and tea will be available.

The main purpose of the meeting is to enable group leaders to meet socially with the Committee and to exchange ideas and discuss common problems (plus solutions) with other group leaders. There will be an informal agenda and it is anticipated that the duration of the meeting will be approximately 1 hour – 1 hour 30 minutes.

If any group leaders are unable to attend it would be appreciated if they could arrange for an informed member of their group to represent them. Any member who is considering forming a new group is also welcome to attend this meeting.

Any queries, or if your group cannot be represented, please contact either:-
Christine Spencer, Group Co-ordinator, 020 8300 4291, or
George Murrell, Secretary, 020 8850 2046.

George Murrell



i Although the above problem solving opportunity is preferable, advice on various aspects of running a group has always been available from the Third Age Trust's own website. For the benefit of those without access to their membership area, I have provided links on our own website to two useful documents; the first deals with the general administration of a group while the second can help with problems that arise. Both links are on the "Home" page.

Webmaster

Membership

All members are reminded to ensure that their membership is renewed if they wish to continue with their chosen groups, even if they do not attend General Meetings. Membership is on an individual basis (and not part of a couple).

Margaret Scambler, Membership Secretary

U3A Jazz Appreciation Network

Holiday to Middleheim Jazz Festival, Antwerp. 14–19 August 2013. Cost £598.00 per person sharing twin/double. Further information is available from Bob Jones, ☎ 01189413889 email jones@bobaudrey.plus.com.



Jazz Appreciation Study Day 2013

11am–4pm 10th July 2013 at the Bridewell Theatre, Bride Lane, Fleet Street, EC4Y 8EQ. Cost £20.00 per person. Further information available from Mike Whitaker ☎ 01278 663492 email mjo.whitaker666@btinternet.com.



Mastermind

The BBC is seeking contestants for the next series of Mastermind. If you are interested phone 0161 836 0315 or email mastermind@bbc.co.uk.

George Murrell

Visit to the Olympic Park

This is a follow-up to my report in the June 2011 Newsletter regarding a visit organised by Barbara Carpenter to the site of the 2012 Olympic Games on 24th May 2011. Until the first weekend in May, the successors to the London Organising Committee of the Olympic Games (LOCOG) are running “Park in Progress” tours from a location close to Pudding Mill Lane DLR Station. On 3rd April we joined one of these tours and were taken by bus to the structure now known as the Arcelor Mittal Orbit – the UK’s tallest sculpture. The viewing platforms at the top provide superb views over the main stadium, the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park (as it is now known), and the London and Docklands skylines. At the time of our visit, three of the temporary Olympic venues were in a state of dismantlement for their re-use elsewhere, and widespread work was going on that will transform the park into its permanent condition as an entertainment and leisure facility. The northern end of the park re-opens to the public on 27th July with a weekend of art, music, theatre, literature, dance and food for all ages, and events such as the 3-day London Anniversary Games, a weekend festival of cycling, and a grand prix badminton event will follow. The park will also host live concerts that currently suffer from restrictions that must be imposed at Hyde Park. The park’s South Plaza will open in the spring of 2014.

Details of all the above can be found on the following website: noordinarypark.co.uk/.

I have added three pictures taken by me from the Orbit’s viewing platforms to the “Gallery” page of our website.

David Smith

GROUP NEWS

Walking in London • Leader Val Gosden



Our February walk was on a bright day, and we were able to see both old and new buildings clearly against the blue sky. On reaching The Royal Exchange, we were fortunate enough to gain permission to see the many wall paintings in The Ambulatory. These feature various scenes and portraits from the past: the Fire of London, Nelson, Henry VIII, to name but three. Our walk then took us further north where we saw the castle-like outside of the Honourable Artillery Company Headquarters, and shortly afterwards we reached Bunhill Fields, a small graveyard where several notable people are buried. Opposite this is John Wesley's House, where we were given a quick guided tour of his home in later life.* Continuing our walk, we came upon an antique showroom in old church buildings, which featured many larger items including fireplaces in many styles. Further on and looking up in Holywell Lane, we saw two old London Underground carriages sited on top of a warehouse: these are now artists' studios. Walking southwards we came to № 30 St. Mary Axe – 'The Gherkin', to most of us. In the outer wall we saw a plaque which marks the site of a Roman Girl's Grave**. Our trip out concluded with a walk along by the river before reaching London Bridge Station.

*Work is currently being carried out at Wesley's Chapel and Museum, but these should be open after May 2013.

**The grave of this teenage girl was discovered by builders when working on the construction of 'The Gherkin'. She was given a Roman reburial after the building was finished, and the inscription reads (in Latin and English): "To the spirits of the dead the unknown young girl from Roman London lies buried here".

'Track the Plaque' was our theme in March, when we walked along many back streets from Leicester Square to Westminster, via Covent Garden. During this circuitous route we not only saw plaques commemorating famous people, but by looking for these plaques we looked *up* and saw interesting features on buildings, both modern and old. Most of the plaques give not only the name of the person concerned, but also their dates and occupations. Some names were most familiar to us but there was surprise at how long ago some of these notables lived, and yet, collectively, we found we knew about them. Others, such as Robert Adam, required a 'Google-search' to identify their achievements. No doubt the names of Sir Joshua Reynolds, Thomas Chippendale, John Logie Baird, Thomas Arne, Charles Dickens, David Garrick, Richard Arkwright, Samuel Pepys, J. M. Turner, Ivor Novello, Rudyard Kipling and Sir Gilbert Sullivan are familiar to U3A members, but others imparted to us some previously unknown information. One example is that of Denis Johnson who made and sold the first bicycle in 1819 (the picture accompanying the plaque showed no pedals and an apparent absence of brakes). Another plaque records that in 1881 the Savoy Theatre was the first public building in the world to be fully lit by electricity, and the last plaque that we viewed was dedicated to John Peake Knight who invented traffic lights in 1868: but how were they lit and operated? Again the computer was able to help: they were revolving gas-powered lanterns with a red light and a green light. Further research by a group member found that, as well as the gas-fired red and green lights, which were operated by a policeman rotating a handle at the foot of the pole at night, semaphore signalling was devised with two outstretched arms indicating 'stop', and when these were each lowered 45°, traffic should 'proceed with caution'. A faulty gas pipe caused an explosion only three weeks after their installation and this innovative project was immediately cancelled. (Electrically powered traffic lights came into being in 1912).

Val Gosden

Freedom Pass Explorers • Leader Val Gosden



Despite a weather forecast of snow to come, a group of thirteen of us travelled to Fairlop in Essex in January. After our customary stop for a coffee, which was much appreciated on such a cold day, we walked to Fairlop Waters – which is a fair-sized lake. The first few flurries of snow descended as we started to walk round the lake, but we decided to continue and walked completely round the lake and by the time we had returned to the road it was snowing hard enough for us to put up our umbrellas or hoods. There were several swans, ducks and coots on the lake, and beside the lake at one point was an imaginative activity centre which contained items made from cut-down trees. A little further on, we were interested to see some fair-sized boulders also included in the activity area. We felt invigorated by the walk, but it was a real pleasure, too, to return to the warm pub for lunch. This is another one of our winter trips out that we feel merits a return visit in the summer.

A bitter wind and the promise of snow was our lot in March. Nevertheless, even though we had cancelled the February trip due to icy conditions, ten hardy souls travelled to Pinner. Pinner is a long-established town with many stylish buildings, including one from the 16th century, which we surmised had been a coaching inn in its heyday, and the parish church which dates from the 14th century. We passed some modern detached houses set on the hill before reaching the track across farmland. Although access to this was easy, leaving the first section was not, for the gate was locked and a very high stile was our only exit. This proved to be quite a challenge for the shorter-legged members of the group, but, with a little help, all of us managed to reach the other side, and continued on to find a busy little café for lunch before returning to the welcome warmth of our homes.

Val Gosden

Ramblers 2 • Leaders Pat & Alf Cracknell



Ten stalwart walkers met at Goddington Park car park on a freezing morning for our March ramble. Everyone was warmly clad – which was just as well as the wind was bitter but we all agreed that, once we got going, it was not so bad. The walk was through fields and woodlands which we had hoped would be showing signs of spring – but not this year. The ‘Five Bells’ in Chelsfield Village provided us with some welcome refreshments and our ramble ended with a walk across a field back to the car park.

Mary Webb

Bird Watching • Leader Margaret Scambler



After our winter break, the Bird Watching group will recommence in May with a trip to Sevenoaks Wildlife Reserve. Anyone wishing to join our group is welcome to come along. Members make their own way to meeting points by car (sharing if/where possible) or by public transport.

If you are interested you should contact the leader whose details appear on the Group Vacancies Page.

Margaret Scambler

Local History 3 • Leaders Christine Withams & Janet Young



Our visit for March was to The Foundling Museum in Brunswick Square, WC1. The Museum explores the history of the Foundling Hospital, first established in 1739 by the philanthropist Captain Thomas Coram, for the maintenance and education of exposed and deserted babies and young children. Helping Coram realise his vision were the artist William Hogarth and the composer George Frederick Handel, and in doing so they created London's first public art gallery. The Museum stands on the site of the original Foundling Hospital which was built in the 1740s and demolished in the 1920s. The present building was built in the early 1930s. The collection includes furniture and fittings from the original Hospital building and includes the Court Room which has a magnificent ceiling, the staircase from the boys' wing and the chapel font. In a smaller room on the top floor you can hear some of Handel's music and see a copy of his will. Also on display are artefacts from the archives, including 'tokens' which mothers had left to identify the babies they were unable to keep until they hoped to be able to reclaim them. This all helps to give you some idea of what life must have been like for the foundlings. If you have not yet made a visit it is well worth it. There is also a cafeteria for refreshments.

Marie & Den Brittain

Local History 1 • Leader Lesley South



Wednesday, March 13th saw sixteen hardy souls standing on Sidcup Station along with other U3A groups all travelling to London. Our destination was Southwark Cathedral, where a church has stood since the 11th century. To avoid the traffic, we walked along Tooley Street and came to the back entrance where the refectory happened to be. This was also the meeting point for our guide, Christine Jenkins, who was excellent in imparting her knowledge with humour.

We started our tour in the nave where it was explained to us that the full name of the building is the Cathedral and Collegiate Church of St. Saviour and St. Mary Overy (Overy means over the river from the City of London) which, in the 13th century, was a slum area. The monastic tradition of the Cathedral's founders is still maintained in a daily round of worship and prayer. Bosses from the 15th century can also be seen.

The tomb of John Glover, the first English poet, who died in 1408, lies on the north side of the nave. Also, there are stained glass windows by Kempe depicting people associated with the Cathedral. Walking from the nave to The Retro-Choir, we passed the Harvard Chapel which commemorates John Harvard who was baptised in the Church in 1607. He became the founder of Harvard University. A trust formed in his name gives two scholarships a year to train choir boys.

The oldest part of The Cathedral is The Retro-Choir where the trials of several Protestant martyrs took place. Behind the High Altar and Great Screen there are four chapels dedicated to various people, one of which is St Andrew's Chapel dedicated to prayer for people with HIV and Aids. There is also a monument to John Bingham who was one of the 'Bargainers' who bought the church from James 1. Others remembered are both William Shakespeare and Sam Wanamaker, the founder of the Globe Theatre. The Memorial to the people drowned following the sinking of the pleasure boat *Marchioness* in 1989 can be seen on the floor just inside the main entrance.

Thanks are due to Annette Holland who organised this most interesting tour.

Barbara Carpenter

Local History 2 • Leader Pauline Watling



Not having visited St. Paul's Cathedral since I was very young, I was looking forward to our trip there. Although the sun was shining, it was a very cold day, so our first stop on arriving at Cannon Street was the Salvation Army Coffee Shop just opposite St. Paul's for a warming cuppa before moving into the cathedral itself. On entering St. Paul's we were greeted by a guide who gave us some interesting facts including:

- A cathedral dedicated to St. Paul has stood on the site for 1400 years.
- Its main oak door is 27ft high and is only opened on very special occasions (This year it will be opened for the Queen's 60th Anniversary on the throne).
- When the cathedral was cleaned in 2004 the Fleming family (of the Fleming bank empire) paid 10 million pounds.

After our welcome chat, we were then left to go around the cathedral ourselves with some of us venturing up the 257 steps to the Whispering Gallery, and then back down into the crypt to see Wellington's and Lord Nelson's tombs. Everyone enjoyed the visit which was packed full of interesting facts and one that ended where we began – back in the Salvation Army Coffee Shop, this time for lunch.

Pauline Watling

i St Paul's Cathedral's dedication to Paul the Apostle dates back to the original church on this site, founded in AD 604. The fourth St Paul's was begun by the Normans after a fire in 1087. Work took over 200 years but a great deal was lost in a second fire in 1136. Although it was consecrated in 1240, a change of heart led to an enlargement commencing in 1256. Following its completion, it was the third longest church in Europe and had one of Europe's tallest spires at some 489 feet. England's first classical architect, Inigo Jones, added the cathedral's west front in the 1630s. Excavations in 1878 showed that the cathedral had been 585 feet long and 100 feet wide (290 feet across the transepts and crossing). The present church dating from the late 17th century was constructed to an English Baroque design of Sir Christopher Wren, as part of a major rebuilding programme which took place after the Great Fire of London. At 365 feet high, it was the tallest building in London from 1710 to 1962.



Editor

Classical Music 1 • Leader Derick Johnson



Our programme for March, which was presented by Jean Wallis, began with Edward Elgar's Enigma Variations, followed by the first movement of Édouard Lalo's Symphonie Espagnole with Tamsin Little on the violin. We then had the Overture to Rossini's The Barber of Seville followed by Mendelssohn's Symphony № 4. After our refreshment break, we played Bedřich Smetana's Vltava – Die Moldau, followed by George Frideric Handel's Organ Concerto opus 7, and Zadok The Priest.

Derick Johnson

GROUP VACANCIES

GROUP NAME	LEADER/CONTACT	VACANCIES
 Bird Watching 1 st Wednesday	Margaret Scambler 020 8315 0108 Gay Braybrook 020 8309 6372	Yes
 Book Reading 1 st Thursday	See Group Co-ordinator 020 8300 4291	2
 Classical Music (Group 1) 2 nd Friday	Derick Johnson 020 8850 1245	Vacancies
 Concerts/Ballet/Opera Various dates & times	Norma Balfour 020 8303 7693	Yes ↳
 Darts (at the Alma pub) 2 nd Monday (noon) 🖐️	See Group Co-ordinator 020 8300 4291	Yes
 Family History Various days	Judith Swain 020 8303 5759	Yes
 Handcrafted Cards (Group 1) 1 st Thursday (2.00 pm)	Val Gosden 020 8300 0664	1
 Local History (Group 1) 2 nd Wednesday	Lesley South 020 8300 8298	2
 Local History (Group 3) 2 nd Wednesday	Christine Withams 020 8850 4144	3
 Ramblers (Group 2) (4–5 miles) 4 th Tuesday	Pat & Alf Cracknell 020 8302 0823	Yes
 Ten-Pin Bowling (Bexleyheath) Mondays (10.00 am) 🖐️	Gay Braybrook 020 8309 6372	Yes
 Theatre (Group 2) Various matinées	Joan & John Somerset 020 8300 0890	Yes ↳

The above groups, unless I am told otherwise by Group Leaders, are the ones with vacancies. Please contact the Group Leader concerned in the first instance, and, if accepted, inform me.

Christine Spencer, Group Co-ordinator 📞 **020 8300 4291**

Why not start a new group?

If you are on the waiting list to join a full group why not create a new one and then advertise it in this Newsletter and on our website? It is not difficult to run a group and leaders of a full one can advise you how it's done.

🖐️ Not during school holidays

↳ Notice on the board at meetings

PROGRAMME

2013

April	Ann Knief	Lola Montez – a 19 th Century Adventuress
May	Mr. Guerdon	Chickens
June	Paul Gourden	Age UK
July	Ian Porter	Suffragettes
August	Peter Gilman	Coastline National Trust
September	Chris McCoory	Rogues, Rascals & Rebels
October	Jack Wheeler	Japanese Gardens
November	Bernard Locket	Author
December	Jack Ripley	Max Miller & Friends

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Chairman	Anne Evans	020 8302 2261
Vice-Chairman	Lesley South	020 8300 8298
Minutes Secretary	George Murrell	020 8850 2046
Treasurer	Christine Smith	020 8304 2305
Membership Secretary	Margaret Scambler	020 8315 0108
Speakers Secretary	Sue Brooks	020 8298 1117
Group Co-ordinator	Christine Spencer	020 8300 4291
Welfare Officer	Kathy Cordell	020 8300 4573
Social Secretary	Vacant	

USEFUL CONTACT NUMBERS

Raffle Organiser	Jackie Burke	020 8302 7395
Newsletter Editor & Webmaster	David Smith	020 8304 2305

Please either email contributions to me at editor@sidcup-u3a.org.uk or post them to me at 56 Crofton Avenue, Bexley, Kent DA5 3AR – typed if possible since this facilitates scanning. *Please submit Newsletter contributions by 3rd of the month – but at any time for the Website.*

WEBSITE

www.sidcup-u3a.org.uk

This Newsletter (including previous editions) may be read or downloaded from our website; our annual booklet, Scambuster, and help with computer problems may also be downloaded. Also available is an index of Newsletter 'Notices' covering the period April 2007 to this issue.

Afterthought

If we don't change our direction, we'll end up where we're headed.